

Council

Meeting

September 14, 2010

Minutes of a Council Meeting of the
Borough Council held at 7:30 P.M. on
Tuesday, September 14, 2010, in the Council
Chamber, Hillsdale, New Jersey.

The meeting was called to order by
Mayor Arnowitz who also led the Salute
to the Flag.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF MEETING

Borough Clerk Sandt stated, "This is a Meeting of the Hillsdale Borough Council on this 14th day of September 2010. Notice of the time and place of this meeting has been provided to The Review, Pascack Press, The Record and Community Life; a copy was posted on the bulletin board outside of this meeting room and provided to any interested parties.

Please notify the Municipal Clerk for any disability requirements necessary for attendance at Mayor and Council meetings. The fire exits are located through the double doors to your left. Please silence all cell phones and pagers.

ROLL CALL:

Borough Clerk Sandt called the roll those present being as follows: Councilmembers Frank, Giancarlo, Schiavone and Weinstein. Absent: Councilmembers DeJoseph and Hanlon. Also in attendance Borough Attorney Paul and Borough Administrator Polce.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: On motion by Councilmember Weinstein, seconded by Councilmember Giancarlo, the minutes of the Council Meeting of September 7, 2010, were approved as presented.

CORRESPONDENCE:

1. JOANNE STAUDT, CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, REQUESTING PERMISSION FOR ARTISTIC CREATION IN VETERANS PARK.

Received and filed on motion by Councilmember Giancarlo, seconded

by Councilmember Schiavone, and unanimously carried.

Mayor Arnowitz said the letter he received indicated they wanted the closure of Park Avenue.

Borough Clerk Sandt said the reason they wanted to close Park Avenue is to allow vendors to drop off their goods.

Mayor Arnowitz said that is a very busy day for the downtown and it would interfere with parking on that street.

Councilmember Giancarlo suggested closing Park Avenue between the hours of 7AM and 8AM for the use of vendors to drop off their goods.

Mayor Arnowitz said parking the fire truck there doesn't require closing the street to all parking. It would be preferable to park the fire truck on Hillsdale Avenue. He is concerned about our merchants on a Saturday.

Borough Clerk Sandt said this will be forwarded to Police Chief Stalter and he will advise the Council of his comments.

Councilmember Giancarlo made a motion predicated upon not closing the street or make arrangements for parking and traffic.

Mayor Arnowitz said the DPW will be closed on October 9.

Councilmember Weinstein said the garbage needs to be stored somewhere.

Councilmember Schiavone suggested if they wanted the garbage removed, they could pay.

Mayor Arnowitz said these decisions will have to be made for all the events in town and we have to eliminate the standby person or to pay to have the lot cleaned. He said some towns are already charging fees to use their parks. As a compromise, we can notify them there will not be a DPW person on duty at that time and we will have bags available for garbage. The bags can be placed right next to the barrel. The closing of the street will be decided by the police department.

Motion

Motion by Councilmember Giancarlo indicating that no DPW personnel will be assigned, bags will be available, and the review by the police department when and if the street is closed and for how long. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Weinstein and unanimously carried.

DISCUSSION:

Mayor Arnowitz said there are no items for discussion, however, we will need to discuss the purchase of another truck for the DPW. We receive a Clean Communities grant yearly and it is the opinion of the CFO and Administrator that if we don't begin using the money, we could potentially lose the grant. We could purchase a state contract vehicle, gasoline fuel. The cost is \$41,329 and we will need the approval of the Council for this purchase. The vehicle will be used for park cleanups and maintenance of the parks, etc.

Motion to purchase a state contract vehicle for the DPW was made by Councilmember Weinstein, seconded by Councilmember Giancarlo.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Councilmembers Frank, Giancarlo, Schiavone and Weinstein

Nays: None

Absent: Councilmembers DeJoseph and Hanlon

Mayor Arnowitz said the Borough has to consider doing a revaluation or reassessment. The difference between the two: with a revaluation a person formally goes to every home and evaluates everything; a reassessment is the review of the assessment of the house and make any necessary changes. We have a backlog of assessments for additions and improvements to homes that need to be done. Most importantly, we are not very successful with our appeals in the commercial area. It costs us money to defend ourselves in an appeal; costs us money when an appeal is won and we pay for three or four years. The cost of a reassessment can be approximately \$200,000 to \$300,000 or \$170,000 to \$300,000; we are not sure of the expense. An assessment is less than a total revaluation but it can be spread out over five years. Last year we finished paying for the last revaluation and then we did the revaluation at the peak property values and the values have since dropped.

He said residents are under the impression that their taxes will go down, but that is not necessarily what will happen. The town still needs dollars to operate but it will stop the appeals. If our assessments go down it will affect the high school funding, affect the county funding for open space and county tax, and it does affect the library funding. It will not affect the 18% we control because there are a certain amount of dollars we need to operate the town. The appeals will be less prevalent because the assessment of the properties will be more in line with the economy.

He said high school taxes are based on property value and that

could change; the county tax is based on property values and the county open space tax is based on property values. The library is based on 1/3 mil of property values. When we do a revaluation, commercial properties tend to drop and are valued closer to their proper valuation than a home. Last time the economy and property values were at their peak; commercial properties are predicated on the value of the property and it is the value of the type of business that is there and both have gone down and they have gone down more than a private home.

Councilmember Weinstein said the amount of tax dollars to be raised remains flat the shift has to be made up on the residential side; it has to be made up in some way.

Mayor Arnowitz said you appeal your taxes which is predicated on what a like home would sell for in the area. That determines the sale prices of homes. Most homes have been selling close to the assessed value. There is the cost of the appeal, the cost of the attorneys to argue the cases and the back taxes.

Mayor Arnowitz said he is introducing the concept and the Administrator set up a meeting with the Tax Assessor and his assistant to discuss a number of items.

Councilmember Schiavone said there seems to be an increase in property values. Values may go back up closer to where they were years ago.

Mayor Arnowitz said the high school tax, county tax and the county open space tax will decrease if the property values decrease.

Councilmember Frank said it could cost Hillsdale more if all the other towns reevaluate and we don't.

Mayor Arnowitz said the earliest to have this implemented would be 2012; the revaluation is done in 2011 and it becomes effective on the 2012 tax bill. The Council should consider this and there is a lot of discussion that we need. This will be placed on the next agenda for discussion.

TOWN DAY

Councilmember Schiavone said the response from the Fire Department was when they wanted to volunteer last time, they were told they were not needed. She wanted to make sure we are all on the same page and that the Recreation Department knows that we have sought volunteers and if they are volunteering, we will use them even if they are just used for an hour or two.

Mayor Arnowitz said Ann Cron of the Recreation Department knows

about the need, the Administrator has been in contact with Stonybrook and Kate Leonard knows we are soliciting volunteers and the DPW cost will be less than it has been in the past.

Two employees from the DPW will be available and when the standby person at the DPW is finished at about 2PM, he will come over also and there will be three persons to clean up. We need people to cook, serve, help set up; the Council needs to go into the crowd and talk about the referendum. We have to get the message out. Many residents don't understand that this is a referendum.

Councilmember Weinstein said Hillsdale has not allocated any funding. River Vale handed out flyers and discussed the issue there at their town function and are hosting an open meeting for all residents. We will be doing the same thing next week and you will see a half page ad in the Pascack Press next week. Signs should be up by next week in order to make people aware. The Pascack Valley Teachers Association has sent out an email and an attachment which is a flyer with bullet points about the issue. It has been distributed in River Vale and in Hillsdale and requests have been made for the local Parent/Teacher Organizations at the Smith School, Meadowbrook School and George White to do the same. There is a fairly concerted effort to blanket both towns with information about this. All four towns will be voting; any single town that has a majority voting "No" will be end of this particular issue which is a direct request to change the funding formula as it exists today. However, it is not necessarily the end of the fight for the process. If Woodcliff Lake and Montvale choose to continue to move in this direction, they will then lobby Trenton to go through other avenues, possibly through the courts, to continue to attain either similar results or a splitting potentially of the school district. It is the impression of everyone trying to get the vote out that the more people to get out the better it will be if this is actually pursued down the road. If 50 people in Hillsdale come out and 26 people vote it down, that is the end of this issue. But down the road, it would be much more impressive for 2000 to have come out to vote it down than just 50. This is really a get out the vote effort and to everyone, email everybody and get the word out and get it done in a big way.

GENERAL PUBLIC HEARING:

Mayor Arnowitz opened the meeting to the public and invited comment from the audience.

Michael Brinzey, 33 Highland Avenue -

The students are the best relay to the parents because most of the parents are too busy to read anything and don't listen to the news. If the children get involved in this situation and impress on them to advise their parents, we would be further ahead.

Councilmember Weinstein said we cannot do distributions through the school so we cannot provide flyers for the children to take home. Our local school district is not directly involved other than offering support.

Mayor Arnowitz said Councilmember Weinstein has done all he possibly can to get message to the schools. The job is getting done to the best ability we can within the confines of the law.

Councilmember Weinstein said River Vale took the lead on this and did seek counsel from their Board of Ed Attorney who in conjunction with the Superintendents of both the Hillsdale and River Vale local schools all agreed that you cannot put out pamphlets suggesting how people vote.

Mayor Arnowitz repeated that we will do everything we legally can do to get the word out.

Alfred J. Murphy, Jr., 5 Cherry Place -
The Governor and Teaneck are entering into a very interesting feasibility study of looking at the merger of their police departments. They are getting \$30,000 from the Prosecutor's Office to pay for the cost associated with that. The Police Chiefs Association is against it and it probably means there is some benefit.

He asked that something be done with the static. He cannot hear everything that is being said. He asked why a gasoline engine truck is being purchased if we have more funds in the Environmental pot. He believed it is better in the long run with diesel.

One of the things that should be considered with the Referendum message is going door to door with flyers. The whole town could be done on a Saturday or a Sunday. Not everyone has email. He would be willing to walk around the town distributing flyers to homes; there are about 3200 homes and people doing so would assist in getting the word out. He said a crew should be at the RR station handing out flyers.

With regard to the labor force, the Council should be looking at the five days an employee works aren't necessarily going to be Monday through Friday as part of the normal work week. The schedule could include if necessary, Saturday. It is a service business and this could be part of the work week. He suggested outsourcing the DPW. We are in dire economic situations.

After a discussion with the Council, the public portion of the meeting was closed.

RESOLUTIONS: (Consent Agenda)

Mayor Arnowitz read the Consent Agenda of Resolutions.

10121 Payment of Bills was introduced by Councilmember Schiavone, seconded by Councilmember Giancarlo.

10122 Endorsing Community Development Projects for AAH of Bergen County, Inc. was introduced by Councilmember Schiavone, seconded by Councilmember Giancarlo.

Motion to approve all Resolutions was made by Councilmember Schiavone, seconded by Councilmember Giancarlo.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Councilmembers Frank, Giancarlo, Schiavone and Weinstein

Nays: None

Absent: Councilmembers DeJoseph and Hanlon.

(SEE COPIES OF THE AFORESAID ORIGINAL RESOLUTIONS AFFIXED HERETO)

LAST GO ROUND

Councilmember Giancarlo said our Borough Clerk investigated ways of purchasing our electricity wholesale and would like to look into purchasing gasoline wholesale. This has been deregulated and we can buy from various companies in the state for approximately 5% less than PSE&G. We will have to make sure we can do that.

Borough Clerk Sandt said the rate we pay is governmentally and he was told we can't get it any cheaper for gas.

Councilmember Giancarlo thanked the Fire Department for the 9-11 ceremony and thanked Jim Frantin for the Candlelight vigil on the evening of 9-11.

Councilmember Weinstein said he cannot emphasize enough how much we need to get people out on this unusual voting date under these unusual voting circumstances. It is not easy to motivate people to do this but please get the word out keep pushing. We need to defeat this resoundingly.

Mayor Arnowitz reminded everyone that on September 21 there will be the meeting in the Council Chamber at 7:30 PM. It is our referendum meeting. The Special Election date is September 28; the last day to mail in the Absentee Ballot request is September 21. The Absentee Ballots are available at the Library and at the Borough Hall.

Regarding the one day a week garbage pickup, the newspaper reported

the correct dates as to what we will be doing yearly. We will not be starting that until November 1st when the contract renews. It could change but are awaiting a final letter to come from the State.

He re-emphasized that taking the recyclables to the curb during the regular pickup costs the town less money because we don't have to pay to have the recyclables hauled away from the DPW and we don't have to pay for the dumpsters there. It is part of our contract with Waste Management.

We are looking for volunteers for Town Day on the 25th. The flu clinic will be held at the Methodist Church on October 7 and October 19.

He will discuss with the Committee regarding the possibility of merging the courts. He put four people on that Committee, Councilmembers Schiavone, DeJoseph, Frank and Giancarlo.

We are still working on plans to get the Pascack Valley Hospital open and are constantly reassured by Trenton that it will happen.

We will be putting out a flyer shortly on the recycling of leaves.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion to adjourn was made by Councilmember Frank, seconded by Councilmember Weinstein, and unanimously carried.

9-14-10

Robert P. Sandt, RMC
Borough Clerk

APPROVED AS PRESENTED

Robert P. Sandt, RMC
Borough Clerk